

being the bravest or most beautiful; that they have mutilated themselves in all ways from the slightest to the most serious; that they have celebrated the most extravagant orgies; and that they have acted against their own most important interests, — all in the name of religion. There is nothing in religion itself which antagonizes sensuality, cruelty, and other base elements in human nature. Religion has its independent origin in supposed interests, and makes its own demands on men. The demands of religion are sacrifices and ritual observances. The whole religious system is evolved within the circle of interests, ideas, and mores which the society possesses at the time. Religion also finds adjustment and consistency with all other interests and tastes of the group at the time. A father of many daughters would use the temple service as a way to provide for one of them.¹ Religion is also extremely persistent. Therefore it holds and carries over to later ages customs which once were beneficial, but which at the later time are authoritative but harmful. If parents threw their children into the furnace to Moiech, why should they not devote their daughters to Ishtar ? If they once practiced sympathetic magic to make rice grow, religion might carry the customs over to a time when they would be shocking and abominable. Although the survival of these customs became sensual and corrupting, it is certain that it was not their original purpose to serve sensuality. They were not devices to cultivate or gratify licentiousness. We know of no case of a primitive custom with such a purpose. The provisions in the laws of

Hammurabi are as simple and matter-of-fact as possible. They are provisions for actual interests which, it seemed, ought to be provided for. Another proof of the innocence of the customs is that in independent cases the same customs were established. The customs were responses of men to the great agents who (as they thought they perceived) wrought things in nature. The methods and means used by the agents were revered. They could not be despised or disapproved by men. Therefore reproduction was religious and sex was consecrated. The whole realm was one of

¹ Maurer, *Volkerkunds^ Bibel^ und Christentkum^* 95.